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Security Council

Seventieth year

Provisional

7407th meeting
Wednesday, 18 March 2014, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Delattre	(France)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Chad	Mr. Cherif
	Chile	Mr. Olguín Cigarroa
	China	Mr. Shen Bo
	Jordan	Mrs. Kawar
	Lithuania	Mr. Baublys
	Malaysia	Ms. Adnin
	New Zealand	Mrs. Schwalger
	Nigeria	Mr. Laro
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Spain	Mr. González de Linares Palou
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Meek
	United States of America	Ms. Power
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Suárez Moreno

Agenda

Security Council mission

Briefing by Security Council mission to Africa (9 to 13 March 2015)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Security Council mission

Briefing by Security Council mission to Africa (9 to 13 March 2015)

The President (*spoke in French*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by the two countries that co-led the Security Council mission to Africa, namely, France and Angola.

I shall now make a statement in my national capacity on the Security Council's mission to the Central African Republic.

First, on the context: from 9 to 13 March, the Security Council visited Africa. We stopped in the Central African Republic; Addis Ababa, with the African Union; and Burundi. I had the pleasure of co-leading this visit with the Angolan Ambassador, Mr. Ismael Gaspar Martins, for the entire mission, and with the United States Ambassador, Ms. Samantha Power, for the Burundi segment.

Regarding the Central African Republic, I should like to highlight the following points.

This was the first visit of the Security Council to the Central African Republic. We spent about two very busy days on the ground. We met with many stakeholders, including the transition authorities. We met with the President and most of her Government, the National Transitional Council and the National Electoral Authority — so the transition authorities; representatives of Central African Republic civil society, including organizations representing women, youth and religious authorities; and the international forces deployed in Central African Republic, namely, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), Sangaris and the European Union military operation in the Central African Republic (EUFOR).

We also went to Bria and held talks with the local authorities, that is, prefects, magistrates, the gendarmerie and the police, representatives of civil society, religious leaders and ex-Séléka representatives. We also visited the Cambodian contingent of MINUSCA.

During this visit, the Security Council wanted first and foremost to get an idea of the situation in the Central African Republic, nearly a year after the adoption of resolution 2149 (2014). We found that the situation that remains tenuous and precarious on the humanitarian and security fronts, but we also saw encouraging signs, such as stabilization, thanks to the deployment of MINUSCA and the excellent work done by EUFOR and Sangaris; and a deep and mostly shared desire to stop the conflict; refugees and displaced persons who have begun returning to their homes, even if that is not the case across the board. The Security Council also noted a trend among political leaders, who hope to successfully complete the transition process.

What we saw and heard will be invaluable for our forthcoming initiatives on the Central African Republic, a review of the troop ceiling for MINUSCA and the renewal of the mandate by the end of April.

Of course, we also used this visit to convey at every stage a message from the Security Council. We encouraged the authorities of the Central African Republic to spare no effort in conducting the transition, including local consultations, which have almost concluded; the Bangui Forum, which is key; and then the elections, with the goal of meeting the set deadlines. We noted the progressive re-establishment of State authority across the territory, with the deployment of administrative teams, and stressed the need to resolutely continue along this path. We encouraged all of our interlocutors to work towards reconciliation and to lay down their weapons.

Finally, I would underscore that the impression we got from this trip was one of a fragile situation, but also of a positive trend that must be encouraged and supported. There are significant challenges are great, but international commitment must remain commensurate. This means in particular that financing is necessary for the immediate priority of elections, for humanitarian appeals, for the reform and reconstruction programmes that are to follow and that will begin swiftly with the deployment of the European Union Military Advisory Mission in the Central African Republic Europeanin in the armed forces sector. We encourage the United Nations as a whole to contribute to this collective effort.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I now give the floor to Mr. Gaspar Martins.

Mr. Gaspar Martins (Angola): I should like to once again express my great appreciation for the conduct of this mission of the Security Council, which, again, as you, Mr. President, just mentioned, visited the Central African Republic and then the African Union in Addis Ababa. I should like to report on the African Union segment.

I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for your leadership during the Security Council mission to Africa. I take this opportunity to thank Mr. Haile Menkerios, Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the African Union, and the Secretariat for their assistance and support in the preparations for and the holding of this meeting.

As the Council is aware, during the second leg of the mission to Africa, the members of the Council met with the African Union Peace and Security Council for the ninth joint annual meeting of the two Councils that took place on 12 March. The agenda for the ninth joint session was aimed at enhancing the partnership between the African Union and the United Nations in matters related to peace and security in Africa, aimed at strengthening the tools for the prevention and management of conflicts and strengthening peacebuilding mechanisms.

The session was an occasion for the African Union Peace and Security Council and the members of the Security Council to exchange views on the following issues: the situation in the Great Lakes, the Central African Republic, Mali and the Sahel, Libya, Somalia, South Sudan, Darfur, the strategy to fight the terrorist group Boko Haram, and the strategic partnership between the United Nations and the African Union.

Experts from both Councils have discussed and finalized a draft joint communiqué which captures the discussions held in the room on the aforer entioned agenda items.

On the situation in the Great Lakes region, the session expressed its concern over the differences between the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), including the Force Intervention Brigade, that might affect operations against the rebel groups, and spoilers, which are supposed to be the focus of this cooperation.

The session also stressed the importance of all signatories respecting and implementing all aspects agreed upon in the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of Congo and the region, signed on 24 February 2013 and recognizing the important role played by the Southern African Development Community and the International Conference on the Great Lakes.

On the Central African Republic, the meeting expressed great concerns about the humanitarian situation in the country; underscored the importance of bringing to justice the perpetrators of war crimes and crimes against humanity, including rape, systematic looting and the forced recruitment of children; and the urgent need to put an end to the culture of impunity that has long prevailed in the Central African Republic.

On Boko Haram, the meeting took note of the decisions of the Peace and Security Council of 29 January and 3 March on Boko Haram. It also took note of a letter from the Chairperson of the African Union Commission to the United Nations Secretary-General transmitting the concept of operations of the multinational joint task force to fight the terrorist group Boko Haram. The members of the Council took note of the request of the Peace and Security Council that the United Nations Security Council take appropriate action following the discussion of the multinational joint task force strategic concept of operations.

On Mali and the Sahel region, the meeting welcomed the ongoing negotiations and expressed support for the Algerian mediation and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, highlighting its contribution to peace and security in Mali.

The meeting addressed the situation in Libya to express concern about the grave violations of human rights committed by armed groups, and expressed support for the efforts of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya and for Special Representative of the Secretary-General Bernardino León for his facilitation of the inclusive political dialogue among the Libyan stakeholders.

On Darfur, the meeting expressed concern about the humanitarian and security situations, and support for the efforts of the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel for the Sudan and South Sudan.

On the situation in South Sudan, the meeting expressed grave concern about the failure of the negotiations and the continuous violations of the agreements by both parties to the conflict. The meeting also reiterated its determination to impose sanctions on those who undermined the ongoing political process, and commended the mediation conducted by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development to achieve a long-lasting peace agreement in the country.

On Somalia, the two Councils welcomed the positive developments and strong partnership between the African Union Mission in Somalia and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia in the fight against the Al-Shabaab terrorist group and in strengthening Somalian institutions as the country enters a crucial and decisive period leading to elections in 2016.

On the review of United Nations peace operations, the meeting noted the importance of strengthening cooperation between the African Union and the United Nations in matters related to peacekeeping operations, and looked forward to the report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations coordinated by former President José Ramos-Horta.

On the enhancement of cooperation between the African Union and the United Nations for the prevention of conflicts in Africa, the meeting stressed the importance of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa and highlighted the need for a continuous dialogue between the two Councils to address common challenges. The experts of the two Councils negotiated and agreed on a draft joint communiqué, which has been finalized in challenging conditions. This brings me to stress the need to improve the preparations for the joint session in order to bring effectiveness to the meeting and better coordination between the African Union Peace and Security Council and our own Security Council.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Angola for his briefing.

I shall now take the floor, once again in my capacity as representative of France, to speak about the last leg of our trip, which was held in Burundi at a critical moment in the history of that country.

Although our time there was brief, we had very fruitful exchanges with President Pierre Nkurunziza, who met with us for over an hour; the Ministers for Foreign Affairs and of the Interior; representatives of civil society, including organizations representing women and youth, and the media; religious authorities; and a very broad spectrum of political parties reprsenting the majority and the opposition alike. We also talked with the United Nations Electoral Observation Mission in Burundi (MENUB) and its Head, Mr. Cassam Uteem, the Resident Coordinator and the country team — in other words, all United Nations agencies on the ground.

The Security Council noted that Burundi has made significant progress in overcoming the challenges inherited from the civil war, but that peace remains fragile. Much of our dialogue naturally focused on the issue of the elections to be held in a few weeks. In that regard, the Security Council came with simple messages. The first was that the organization of credible, free and fair elections in 2015 would be crucial to the future of Burundi, and that it was imperative that the electoral process be peaceful, inclusive, fair and transparent.

The second message was that full respect had to be shown for the foundational texts that Burundi has adopted, which have led to the evident stabilization of Burundi. These include the Arusha Accords, which must be honoured in letter and in spirit as the linchpin of stability in the country and remain its lodestar, and of course the Constitution, as well as the road map for elections and the declaration recently signed by the political parties, pledging to conduct the elections peacefully.

Our third message was that there was an absolute need to maintain the cohesion and unity of Burundian society. Any debate that divides Burundi society is dangerous, especially at this sensitive moment, and we have called on all political stakeholders there to make the country's best interests, peacebuilding, the search for consensus and peace their highest priorities and motivation. These were the messages that the Secretary-General himself recalled yesterday when he expressed his concern about the attempted assassination of Mrs. Haberisoni, the wife of opposition leader Agathon Rwasa. The dangers of escalation are real as elections approach, and we therefore call again on the stakeholders not to resort to violence and to engage fully in the peaceful process.

Our discussions also allowed us to address issues relating to human rights — in particular to express our concerns with regard to the reduction of political space, restrictions on freedom of assembly and expression,

and the constraints imposed on the media — and to the independence of the judiciary. The concerns expressed by the political parties and civil society organizations were relayed to the authorities with whom we met.

In the three countries that the Security Council visited, we enjoyed the best possible reception and were able to carry out comprehensive and in-depth interviews and travels that were extremely enlightening and useful. On behalf of all my Security Council colleagues, I thank the authorities of the Central African Republic, Ethiopia and Burundi; the African Union; the United Nations field missions — the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic and MENUB; and all services and departments of the Secretariat for having assured the full success of our trip with their professionalism and rigour.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

The meeting rose at 10.30 a.m.